DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 880 CE 052 917

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TITLE Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education. A Conference Planning Guide.
INSTITUTION Orange County Human Relations Commission, Santa Ana, CA.
SPONS AGENCY Pacific Telesis Foundation, San Francisco, CA.
PUB DATE Nov 88
NOTE 49p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Education; *Parent Participation; *Parent School Relationship; Parent Teacher Cooperation; *Parent Workshops; *Program Development

ABSTRACT

This guidebook outlines a process for producing a parent educational conference designed to increase parental involvement in children's education. It is based on the experiences of the planners of the Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education conferences that have been conducted by the Orange County, California, Human Relations Commission. A personal perspective is provided on some of the problems that emerged from past conferences and how they were addressed. The guide is organized in six sections covering the following topics: (1) initial considerations (target outreach, conference planning, conference program, and initiating the planning process); (2) conference sponsorship and budget; (3) conference committees; (4) the conference day; (5) conference follow-up; and (6) public relations. The workshops are provided in a variety of languages in addition to English. A sample parent conference program is appended. (KC)

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Parents As Partners for Excellence in Education

A Conference Planning Guide

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November 1988

by
Angelina F. Veyna

Orange County Human Relations Commission

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Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education

A Conference Planning Guide

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This guide was made possible by a grant from the

PACIFIC TELESIS Foundation

This parents' guide is made available by the

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Preface

More and more, research is confirming the reality that parent involvement in their children's educational process contributes towards the academic success of the students. There are different ways for parents to participate in this learning process. The more a parent knows about the various facets of the educational process and about contemporary educational issues, the more parents can make informed decisions regarding their children's education.

A conference where many of these topics are presented and discussed is one means by which this information can be shared with parents. Our experience in sponsoring annual parent conferences indicates that these communal events also serve as a catalyst for parents to begin or expand their level of participation. Our experience also suggests that an *annual* one-day conference is not sufficient for addressing in-depth many of the educational situations in which parents find themselves on a daily basis.

It is our hope that this guidebook will inspire educators, community members, and parents to hold their own conference on a regular basis for the benefit of all our children because . . .

Education is a family affair.

Introduction

For the past three years the Orange County Human Relations Commission in conjunction with the San Diego Multifunctional Resource Center, Pacific Bell, the Orange County Community Development Council and local educational agencies, has sponsored the annual Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education Conference. The conference offers presentations by keynote speakers, a variety of workshops on educational topics, entertainment and childcare. Each year the conference takes place in a different locality within the County with co-sponsorship by the local school district. Because of the multicultural nature of Orange County's population, the workshops are provided in a variety of languages in addition to English. In May 1988 the conference took place at Saddleback High School in Santa Ana, California and attracted approximately 200 parents.

Sponsoring a successful parent educational conference involves innumerable decision-making and coordinating responsibilities. As an individual who had just peripherally participated in planning a prior conference and now finding herself responsible for many of the coordinating activities, I discovered that having had an outline of the various planning components could have made my responsibilities much easier. If anything, the outline could have delineated what *more* I had to do.

In this guidebook you will find described the various stages, activities, and considerations we all experienced as we prepared the lastest Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education Conference. Comments by the author are interspersed throughout the text in order to provide a more personal perspective of some of the problems that emerged and how we addressed them.

As with any major event, this conference could not have been possible without the collaboration of numerous sponsoring agencies, educators, community representatives, students, businesses, and parents. We wish to dedicate this guidebook to them and to all of the educators and parents who promote a positive learning environment. It is with sincere commitment that we hope you find this guidebook useful for planning and holding your own local parent conference in order to facilitate the empowerment of parents.

We wish you success with your next parent conference!

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Planning the Conference: Initial Considerations

Planning a conference for parents involves numerous decision-making and coordinating abilities. As in any venture, the initial responsibility in hosting an educational conference for parents consists of defining the objectives of the conference and identifying the population you wish to address. The overall goal for the Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education Conference is to facilitate greater parental involvement in the schools with the premise that parent involvement enhances the personal and academic success of all students.

The objectives of the parent conference are threefold: 1) for parents to develop a better understanding of the school system, 2) for parents to be updated on pertinent issues affecting their family and their children's education, and 3) to provide an opportunity for parents to come together and share common experiences with regards to their children's social and academic development. The conference is directed towards low-income and minority parents because it is precisely these sectors who often find themselves disenfranchised from their local educational and community organizations.

Target Audience

As previously noted, the conference is provided for a multicultrual audience. This past year, the decision was made to target six different language-speaking populations: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao and Chinese. The decision to provide workshops in a variety of languages was part of the original conference plan, the expectation being to provide an opportunity for parents to mutually exchange ideas. Though such a decision was well-intentioned, it became apparent in developing this past conference that addressing such diverse populations entails more than just adding these language groups to the program. The need for providing culturally relevant speakers, printing the program in various languages, and arranging for translators had been recognized; however, it soon became apparent that the most crucial factor

-- how to effectively inform and attract this multicultural population to the conference and how to tend to *all* of their needs on the conference day would require intensive outreach efforts beyond the capabilities of the organizing committee. Consequently, one of the languages was eventually deleted from the program.

Community Outreach

The initial design for the Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education Conference called for the event to be held in a different community each year. By rotating the conference, different school districts would be afforded the opportunity to co-sponsor the event and different parents would be given the opportunity to attend. Though outreach efforts are concentrated in the host community, the conference is announced throughout the county.

A review of the conference registration forms of past conferences indicates that most of the conference audience is derived from the school district and the neighborhoods surrounding the conference facility. Though information about the conference was disseminated utilizing a variety of communication networks [see Outreach Committee], it became apparent that *personal* outreach efforts were decisive in attracting the parents. These efforts consisted of personal invitations extended by conference committee members at local parent meetings, conference flyers mailed to parents who had previously attended the conference, phone calls made to parents several days prior to the conference, and mention of the conference to personal friends. Many of the teachers of the hosting school district also announced the conference to the students, who in turn, shared the information with their parents.

It appears that the least effective method of attracting parents was by simply handing out flyers at local events. It also became evident that many of the parents who attended the conference were individuals who already were involved to some degree in the school system, for example, as a member of a school/district advisory committee. The highest percentage of parents

who attended the Santa Ana conference was Spanish-speaking which reflected the surrounding Latino population.

In sum, at the onset of the planning process it is necessary to carefully consider the varying populations you wish to attract and the geographic extent of your outreach efforts, especially if they are to be concentrated in one or two key communities. These decisions will most likely depend upon the economic resources of the sponsoring agencies, and the personnel resources of your school district and the conference committee.

Conference Program

In planning the program, there are a variety of logistical decisions that must be made. The conference format we have successfully used for the past three years and has been successful is comprised of an introductory general session, followed by a variety of workshops from which the parents make selections, lunch, and a closing general session. It is important that a special guest or activity be scheduled for the closing event in order to keep your audience for the entire day. Ample time also needs to be allotted for lunch, for visitation of exhibiter or service-provider tables (if included), and time to get from one session to another.

Before deciding on the program format, you need to consider what your expectations are for the conference day. If you want the parents to become well informed on a given topic and desire informational processing activities, you may want to schedule the sessions for more than an hour. If you want your audience to be exposed to a number of topics, then you may want to schedule shorter sessions, e.g., 30-45 minutes. Regardless of how much time you provide for each session, the conference evaluation forms will most likely indicate that they were not long enough.

Another idea is to provide a workshop on a critical educational issue confronting the host or nearby community. The session would allow affected parents to come together, discuss the issue, strategize how to approach it, and plan a future course of action.

The duration of the conference day will also need to be carefully planned. Some of the variables meriting consideration include allowing sufficient time for parents to arrive at the conference site, and deciding whether you want lunch to divide the conference day or make lunch and entertainment the closing events. If childcare is provided, you need to consider for how long childcare monitors can be arranged and for how long children can physically/socially endure in a new environment.

Selecting a representative group of presentors for the keynote addresses and for the workshops will undoubtedly prove a challenge; keeping your audience in mind will serve as the key for this selection. Some of the factors to consider as you select the speakers are: knowledge of the subject matter, cultural sensitivity to the guests of the varying language communities, and adaptability of the content for a diverse level of educational experience. You may want to invite local community leaders to serve as keynote speakers, or may want to have a celebrity address one of the general sessions and utilize that person's drawing power to attract a larger audience. As you select your speakers you will also want to be cautious about balancing your speakers between male and female presentors in order to provide a variety of role models. In selecting all of the presentors, it is important that you keep in mind their ability to effectively communicate the messages you are trying to share with parents on that single day.

Though the topic of the workshop will most likely determine the speaker, if you are inviting a multicultural community, then you will want to provide presentors who can effectively communicate in the language of the audience and who also represent the various ethnicities. Additionally challenging is the fact that some cultural groups have an unwritten code as to who is considered as having sufficient status to merit serving as a speaker; factors such as these will want to be considered from the onset. For this reason it is also important that the conference planning committee reflect the ethnicities of the communities to be addressed at the conference.

Acknowledging the sponsoring agencies who are promoting the conference is crucial for future public relations. You may want to have representatives from the various agencies or local politicians serve as official greeters.

The date of the conference will be influenced by a number of variables, a primary concern being the weather. Fall and Winter may be too cold or there may be a possibility of rain which will influence whether you wish to hold the conference in open or closed facilities. While Spring and Summer may provide a nicer environment, such factors as winds and sunlight may also determine whether you want all or some of your activities outside. Whatever season chosen, you may want to prepare an alternative conference plan in case a sudden change of weather takes place.

Since the Parents as Partners Conference focusses on educational issues, many educators argue for the conference taking place towards the beginning of the academic year so that the information the parents acquire will be put to use the rest of the academic year. However, some sponsoring agencies can only spend funds during a determined period of time which may fall towards the end of the academic year. As soon as an approximate time period is identified, any restrictions for scheduling a specific date will need to be discussed with the sponsoring agencies. The preferred date additionally needs to be reviewed with the school district and the site calendar manager to assure that the conference day will not conflict with any other school or community event.

Initiating the Planning Process

Arrangements need to be made by the sponsoring agencies with the host site. In the case of the 1993 Parents as Partners Conference, the event was jointly sponsored by the Orange County Human Relations Commission, the San Diego State University Multifunctional Resource Center, and the UCI Parents in Partnership Program. Each of these organizations has as one of its goals the increased participation of parents in their children's educational process.

To initiate the conference planning process, a steering committee comprised of a representative of each agency approached the principal at a local high school to host the conference. (To date, the conference has been held at a local intermediate or high school, but the conference can also take place at a local college or community center.) Besides the principal, also present at the meeting were other campus officials such as the head counselor, activities director and media director, to offer their advice on the logistics of the conference.

Some of the topics discussed were finalizing the date of the conference, identifying what facilities could be used on campus, identifying who the school representative would be to attend the steering committee meetings, and reviewing what contributions the school or district could make, for example, donating staff time, reproduction costs for flyers, maintenance care costs, etc. After this initial meeting is held, and the conference committee continues to undertake the necessary activities, it is important that the school principal be kept abreast of the arrangements being made.

An application or agreement may need to be submitted to the sponsoring district or agency to formalize the arrangements and to place the conference date on the school district calendar. Without a doubt, a positive relationship with the sponsoring site and/or district coordinator makes for a more successful conference.

II. Conference Sponsorship and Budget

As previously indicated, the Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education Conference was a collaborative effort by a variety of agencies. Some of the agencies who may want to help sponsor a parent conference include federal, state, or local educational agencies, for example the County Department of Education; local colleges or universities; corporations and businesses, e.g., Pacific Bell; local civic or special-interest organizations, e.g., the California Association for Bilingual Education; and local city/county agencies, e.g., the local community development council. A partnership comprised of varying sponsoring agencies serves to promote a positive attitude that education is truly a community concern. In addition, their financial resources can help to distribute the costs involved in conducting the conference.

The budget for the 1988 Parents as Partners conference appears on a following page. You will notice that the primary costs incurred were for honorariums for the speakers, food for the parents and children, childcare, and reproduction costs. Food costs can be lowered by approaching local businesses/restaurants and requesting that they donate food. [Don't forget to recognize them in your conference program and other printed materials]. Honorarium costs can be lowered by asking the speakers to donate their time or in some cases, representatives from certain agencies are expected to do presentations as part of their employment responsibilities. If a single agency cannot cover the costs of the keynote speakers, you may want to divide the costs among agencies. Though volunteers can be acquired for childcare, we have felt the need to reimburse the primary coordinators.

Additional costs necessary to carry out the conference include the preparation and printing of the conference flyers and program (these amounts increase if printing is to be done in a variety of languages); staff time to promote the conference; postage costs for disseminating the flyers and internal correspondence; and staff time and mileage costs to attend planning meetings and other events related to the conference. This past year one agency donated the costs for the

mailing of approximately 700 pieces of mail, the local school district donated personnel and reproduction costs throughout the preparation phase and on the conference day, a third agency donated the primary coordinator's time and mileage incurred.

Peripheral costs which sometimes are left out of a general budget involve public relations costs such as balloons, streamers, posters, etc. to create a festive ambiance and photography costs. After the conference, photos can be sent to the local media to have them print a follow up article (especially desireable if the press does not attend the conference), or to create a pamphlet or flyer for promoting the conference the following year, i.e. to support your request for funds from sponsoring agencies. Slides can be used to promote the conference at parent group meetings or for parents to view as they enter general session rooms on the day of the conference.

The creation of a *mood* for the conference contributes towards its success, but again extra costs may be incurred for colorful posters or multi-colored decorations. Your budget will determine how decorative the name tags for the presentors and special guests can be. The conference budget will also decide if such "extras" as conference T-shirts can be made available. [This year, T-shirts reading *Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education - A Personal Commitment* were sold at the conference as a promotional and money-making activity. The date of the conference was deleted from the T-shirts so that leftovers could be sold the following year.]

It is very important that the budget be realistic and that it include the various components just discussed; you may want to add an additional line to the budget for unforseen costs.

Sample Budget for a Parent Conference

Agency I:

Keynote Speaker (one-half of cost)	$ 150.00
Special workshop speaker	200.00
Four speakers @ $100	400.00
Four speakers @ $50	200.00
Four childcare coordinators @ $75	300.00
Sub-Total	**$ 1,250.00**

Agency II

Costs for continental breakfast (estimated 300 persons)	
Children's snacks and lunches (estimated 200 children)	
Attendee's lunches (estimated 300 persons)	
Sub-Total	**$1,175.00**

Agency III: Reproduction Costs

Preparing of conference program layout	$59.03
Reproduction of 600 programs	853.30
Sub-Total	**$912.33**

Grand Total for an estimated	
400 adults and 200 children	**$3,337.33**

III. The Conference Committees

Sponsoring an educational conference for parents involves a collaborative effort of persons with a variety of skills. You will probably find that throughout the planning phase your committee members will dwindle down to a core group. The following is a list of the various committees we have created to carry out the various activities. We have found throughout the years that identifying each committee's responsibilities from the very beginning makes for a more successful planning phase.

The **conference committees** are comprised of representatives from the sponsoring agencies, representatives from local education agencies, staff from the sponsoring school district and conference site, and other concerned citizens. By also inviting parents and students to become members of the committees you provide an opportunity for both groups to develop leadership skills. Elsewhere we have already mentioned the importance of your committee members representing the diverse populations you are inviting to the conference.

To ensure effectiveness throughout the planning process, each of the conference committees needs to take responsibility for their assigned tasks, that is, meet independently between general meetings to subsequently report on their activities. The committees thus are encouraged to schedule their own individual meetings for planning and discussion. A committee chair, decided upon by the committee members, should communicate directly with the steering committee. The chair should appoint a person to serve as the committee recorder.

Committee Chairs' responsibilities include: scheduling and convening all committee meetings, preparing the agenda for those meetings, overseeing the development of ideas and themes, and meeting with the steering committee in order to keep them informed.

Committee Recorders' responsibilities include: assisting the committee chair in planning the agenda, arranging the meetings, and taking minutes at the committee meetings. It is strongly suggested that once the necessary committees are identified and the conference date

confirmed, that a timeline indicating when the various responsibilities must be completed be shared with all of the members.

The **Steering Committee** is comprised of a representative from each sponsoring agency. The steering committee's responsibilities include: overall organization of the conference, development of the conference program, contacting and securing consultants and keynote speakers, general public relations activities, including correspondence, and coordinating the evaluation phase of the conference.

The **Outreach/Publicity Committee** reponsibilities involve: attending district and school-affiliated functions to inform parents about the conference, attending community functions to invite the audience to the conference, and preparing posters and disseminating them throughout the county. It is important for this committee to work closely with local community agencies and community centers. Depending upon the degree of publicity desired, members of this committee may want to be assigned to key locations throughout the community, e.g., local ethnic shopping centers. Outreach committee members might also collaborate with other persons who come in close contact with members of the target populations, for example, local service/community providers.

The **Fundraising Committee** is primarily responsible for acquiring additional economic resources beyond those provided by the sponsoring agencies. Since sponsoring agencies are often restricted as to what conference costs they can incur, this committee can seek money for other/extra conference-related costs, e.g., film and development costs for photographs, decorative items to create the conference "mood," printing of large conference posters, folders with the conference theme printed on them, etc.

The **Food Committee** is responsible for providing food for four meals during the conference day, these are: 1) a continental breakfast comprised of coffee, juice and sweet bread to be set out for the parents during the morning as they arrive, 2) a snack for children between

the time they register and their lunch time, 3) the children's lunch, and 4) lunch for the general audience.

As these meals are planned, it is important to consider several food and serving options. If your parent conference will involve a multiethnic audience, you may want to offer a variety of food selections. It may, however, be easier if non-cultural-specific food such as sandwiches and salads are served. You also need to consider the time necessary to prepare the meals since the conference day tends to run quickly. The easier it is to prepare and set out the food, the smoother your day will run. Another item for this committee to consider is whether all members will be working jointly on each meal event, or whether some committee members will be assigned to handle one meal while other members prepare for another.

When and how each of these meals will be served also merits careful synchronizing. For example, the coffee should be ready and the rolls set out even prior to the time registration is scheduled to begin. With regards to the children, their snack should be served some time between their arrival at the conference site and their lunch time. If the childcare area is distant from the serving area, you will need to make arrangements to ease the serving. It is also important that the food selected for the children be appropriate and nutritious. As for the general lunch, you will have to decide whether it will be sit down or buffet style. If buffet, then it is important that assistants serve a similar amount of each dish to everyone to ensure that sufficient food is available for everyone and that everyone has an opportunity to taste the various diverse foods provided. Special guests should be told what the plan for serving themselves will be.

Prior to the conference day, the food committee is responsible for designing the menus for each of these three events and obtaining estimates of the costs involved. As soon as the committee is formed, it should begin to contact local eateries , e.g., Carl's, McDonald's, Burger King, etc., to attempt to have them donate some, if not all, of the food and refreshments. When these agencies are approached, they should be informed that their contribution will be recognized

at the conference. (It is important that the committee not limit itself to approaching just one or two agencies because neither one of them may come through in the end.)

The sooner the meal arrangements are finalized, the less tension towards the conference day. It is also helpful if the steering committee is kept informed of the meal arrangements so that they can offer additional options if some of the food agencies do not respond. When estimating the amount of food necessary, the committee needs to take into account the parents, the speakers, the support staff, and any special guests. Perhaps the most difficult task for the food committee will be estimating the number of guests and children who will be attending.

The **Media Committee** is responsible for preparing the news releases and notifying the press about the conference and keynote speakers. It has been found in the past that if a press conference or briefing is held prior to the conference day, they are more likely to be present on the conference day. Media outreach efforts also involve preparing and ensuring that public service announcements (*PSA's*) are prepared and announced. Since the Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education Conference attempts to attract parents from culturally diverse backgrounds, it is important that the key media resources in each language community be contacted; a list of these "ethnic" resources should be prepared at the onset. Part of any media outreach plan needs to include personal phone calls to the press one or two days prior to the conference day.

On the day of the conference, the media committee is reponsible for having a table set aside where representatives of the press can register and pick up a packet with the conference press release (in the appropriate language) and any other pertinent information which will assist them in documenting the day's events. Also included should be a list of the person or persons who can be interviewed by the press.

The **Publications Committee** is responsible for preparing the conference flyers and posters, the conference program, the area signs for the conference site -- signs stating *welcome* , signs indicating where key conference areas are located, e.g., registration, exhibits, bathrooms,

etc.; and door signs indicating the workshop titles and room numbers. Again, any announcement or sign and the conference program(s) will have to be prepared in the various languages; it is most likely they will have to work closely with the language facilitation committee.

Since visibility is crucial, attention will have to be given to the quality and proportions of the signs. Signs posted on nearby streets will help direct guests to the conference site. If the school has a large announcement board, you may also want to arrange to have the conference announced on it. (It is financially easier if the printing/reproduction costs are shared by several of the sponsoring agencies. Also, one office or person should serve as the central distributing location for the flyers should other committe members, school district representatives, or community agencies need additional announcements.)

The **Registration Committee** is reponsible for activities related to registering both the parents and the children. There are two main tasks for this committee's members: 1) keep a running list of the persons who have pre-registered for the conference and the number of children whom they have signed up for childcare, and 2) registering guests the morning of the conference. To ease the registration process it is important that "pre-registered" and "on-site registration" tables be made available. It is easier for the parents to register their children for childcare if the forms are simple and in the parent's native languages. (A system for easily reporting how many parents and children plan to attend the conference would be helpful for subsequent reporting to the steering committee.)

After the Steering Committee secures the conference site, the **Facilities Committee** then follows up by conducting a walk-through of the site to review what sections/buildings are best for the general sessions, the workshops, the meal areas, and special events, i.e., entertainment. This committee also needs to make sure that the appropriate paperwork has been submitted and authorized for the use of the facility, and that they identify whether any costs will be incurred for use of the facility or a portion thereof. It is also necessary for this committee's members to

communicate with the audiovisual, activities, and maintenance directors at the conference site throughout the planning process. If the conference committee will not have access to the site's audiovisual equipment, then it will be necessary to make other arrangements; the sponsoring school district or nearby colleges may provide some of the necessary equipment.

Identifying exactly where each of the day's events will take place will be crucial and these decisions will have to be coordinated with the steering committee and all other committees to arrange for the following: a location for the general sessions, food preparation and serving areas, an exhibits area, childcare area, workshop rooms, a secretarial station, and a room for a post- conference reception if one is scheduled.

Since parents will want to be exposed to as much information as possible regarding local social and educational resources, an **Exhibitor's Committee** may want to be included as part of the conference planning organization. This committee is responsible for contacting agencies and educational institutions and inviting them to share their information with the parents. Some of the agencies who may want to be contacted include the local PTA, the Red Cross, recruiters from community and 4-year colleges, job opportunity and health programs. This committee will need to confirm the agencies' participation, secure an exhibitor's table for each, and make any necessary arrangements in the event they need audiovisual equipment. (Based on past experience, the committee should request that they have a representative at the table at all times and inform them that any literature left unattended will be subsequently disposed).

The **Transportation Committee** is responsible for identifying different means of transportation to make the conference more accessible to the parents. The first step is to identify if the site or sponsoring school district can provide any transportation on the conference day. If this is not possible, they should then contact nearby districts or colleges to see if they can arrange any transportation. If the local district can provide transportation, then several key pickup locations will want to be designated and be announced as conference information is disseminated.

A second transportation option involves contacting school districts who are interested in sending parents and requesting they provide their own transportation. A third option is for committee members to contact local community centers to see if they can provide transportation. A fourth option is for parent group leaders to arrange carpools to attend the conference from their respective area. (If this is done, then the flyers distributed in their neighborhood should specify the location and time that the car pool will meet.)

Some of the most critical responsibilites on the conference day are those managed by the **Childcare Committee.** In conjunction with the steering committee, the childcare committee needs to identify the various age groups for which childcare will be provided. This past year childcare was provided for four groups: recently-born to 2 year olds, 3 to 5 year olds, 6 to 9 year olds, and 9 year olds and above. Generally, each of these age groups is assigned to one room with staff in each room consisting of one primary coordinator, two assistants, and numerous student helpers. Though childcare forms will most likely be completed by parents during the conference registration process, a second form needs to be completed for each child in the room assigned (to ensure that children are handed over only to their parents at the end of the day).

Some of the additional responsibilities of the Childcare Committee involve acquiring a list of the children who have been pre-registered, working with the food committee to identify the menu and serving times, locating sufficient personnel to care for the children on that day, and acquiring and making available a variety of toys/games for the children. Procedures for the children's use of bathrooms also needs to be planned. It is also important that first-aid kits be accessible in each of the childcare rooms.

The conference can conclude on an enthusiastic note if a special effect such as doorprizes are promoted throughout the day. The **Doorprize Committee** is responsible for contacting potential businesses/restaurants for donations. In selecting the donor agencies, it is important to keep your guest population in mind. You may want to hand out several major adult and

children's gifts, or you may want to provide numerous smaller gifts. During our past conference, a small educational gift for a child was handed out with each adult prize.

Acquiring gifts early-on in the conference planning process can help ensure that you have collected the types of prizes you wish to provide, and also that there will be sufficient time to acknowledge the donors in the conference program. The primary post-conference responsibility of the doorprize committee is to send out thank you notes to the donors and possibly also sharing with them a copy of the program where their contribution is recognized.

The **Language Facilitation Committee** is responsible for ensuring that all necessary materials and events are provided in the languages of the multi-ethnic parents who are invited. Working closely with the Publications Committee, the language committee is responsible for translating the conference flyers and posters, translating the conference evaluation forms, translating the conference program, making arrangements for the conference day so that guests are able to understand the keynote speakers if these do not speak in their native language, and assisting in the preparation of the signs/announcements for the conference facility.

During this past conference we had the valued opportunity of collaborating with the translators of the sponsoring district's bilingual/bicultural department but this may not always be possible. Regardless of whom the translators are, it is important that the translations be carefully reviewed for clarity of language and orthographic errors.

The **Public Relations Committee's** purpose is to make the guests feel welcome and comfortable while at the conference, and to promote a positive learning environment. Some of the tasks of this committee include decorating the site, preparing tables where presentors and special guests can register, preparing their name tags and packets, and directing guests to the various events/workshops held during the conference day.

Students from the sponsoring school district can serve as a key element for this committee. This past year one of the steering committee members who worked at the conference site made arrangements to include a large number of students from the school. Some of the students

served on a panel and presented a short essay on how parents influenced their lives. Other students were assigned to committee chairs to assist them as found neccessary, while yet other students helped decorate the school, direct guests, and take photographs.

All of the committees just described need not be created for your specific conference. In fact, depending on the size of your organization, some of the responsibilities can be taken over by fewer committees. The key to the conference planning process is communication -- making sure that everyone understands their responsibilities, that the committees work closely with the steering committee, and that everyone accomplish their own tasks.

IV. The Conference Day

Several days prior to the conference day, members of the various committees will need to come together to prepare the "Conference Packet," a folder which will be handed out to each guest. The packets we have offered generally contain the conference program, plain paper for notetaking, a pen or pencil, and any other informational literature for the parents such as community resource pamphlets or parenting tips. These are handed out to each guest at the time they register.

Prior to the conference day, a room or an office at the conference site should be designated as the conference administrative center. The assistant assigned to this office should be prepared to cover incoming and outgoing calls and be ready for any necessary last minute typing. It is suggested that the office be prepared with pens/pencils, paper, chalk, etc., and a duplication machine if possible for any last minute xeroxing.

At the final planning meeting prior to the day of the conference, the committee members should have been informed to arrive at the conference site one hour before registration time. (It is easier if the conference site is set up the night before, but you may not always have access to the buildings prior to the conference day.) Each committee should immediately begin to carry out their responsibilities; some of the most important include putting up the welcome and direction signs, setting up the registration tables for the parents, speakers, and media; preparing the continental breakfast, and making sure the general session room has been set up. One entrance at the site may want to be designated as the "official" entrance in order to route the parents through registration in an orderly fashion .

The General Session: For audio and visual purposes, it is best if the general sessions are held in a room that is large enough to comfortably seat everyone, yet not so huge that there is a great distance between the speakers and the audience. The sequence of each speaker should have been detailed prior to the conference day and it is logistically easier if one person only

serves as the master/mistress of ceremonies. (I would like to caution you against allowing last minute speakers to address the audience; their presentation may not 'fit' with the rest of the speeches or they may take unintended additional time.)

The session should of course begin on time and with a welcome and a recognition of some of the special guests in the audience including the corporate sponsors, the members of the Conference Advisory Board [if one exists], school district representatives and elected officials. If you are addressing a multi-language population, you may want to make special arrangements to seat language groups in certain sections of the audience and have translators seated as closely to them as possible, or perhaps make arrangements for earphones. You may also have to secure translators for the front stage to summarize the presentations by the keynote speakers.

As the audience is coming in, you might provide a continuous slide show of last year's events or related to education. Members of the public relations committee should help to seat the guests. Before breaking for the workshops, the conference day schedule should be reviewed with the audience to ensure that they know where the workshops and bathrooms are located, and where lunch and the entertainment will take place.

The Workshops: The presentors should have been notified in their letter of confirmation to stop by their registration table to pick up their packets. Their packet should include a short cover letter about the sign-in and evaluation process, the evaluation forms, information about where to leave them after the session, and a copy of the conference program. If a reception will be held after the conference, you may also want to include this announcement in the folder. One last suggestion might include requesting they adhere to the conference schedule.

The workshop rooms should display their signs indicating the session title and room number, and each should already contain audiovisual equipment which the speakers have previously requested. (You may want to have some extra equipment available in case a speaker did not reserve the equipment or to replace a defective machine.) Items such as paper, pencils, and chalk should be made available to the presentors. In planning the location of the

workshops, it may be easier for parents on the conference day if similar language sessions are located in one area.

Lunch: As previously noted, lunch can be utilized to divide the day or as a final conference event. In either case, the tendency has been to provide approximately an hour for eating time with the entertainment beginning half way through the period. Entertainment can span all the way from theatrical groups, to dance groups, to musical groups. For this component to be successful, a central area should be designated just for entertainment purposes and the audiovidual equipment should have been previously arranged. Where the audience will be seated in regards to the entertainment also needs to be considered. Again, considering the multicultural diversity of the conference audience, you will probably want this diversity to be reflected in the choice of your entertainment.

Closing Session: This session will probably be held in the same location as the morning's. You will probably want this speaker to be rather enthusiastic in order to keep the audience's attention. You may also want the format of this session to differ from the morning's, for example, having an adult or student panel discussing an educational topic. As part of the closing ceremonies, you will want to acknowledge any newly-arrived special guests, individuals who made the conference possible, e.g., funding agencies, and the members of the steering and conference committees. The conference should then culminate with the drawing of the doorprizes, a thank you to everyone, and a possible comment about the importance of parent participation in the educational system.

As the conference day ends, it is easier if all of the committee members work together to take down the signs, take down tables, pick up papers, etc. in order to leave a positive image to the host site personnel. The conference committee may have decided to hold a post-conference reception to wrap up the day; this event can take place at the conference facility or at someone's home.

V. Conference Follow Up

Unfortunately, the conference planning program does not finalize with the end of the conference day. There are still numerous responsibilities yet to complete some of which include the following:

1) Making sure that the funding agencies have completed their contribution responsibilities. (You may need to provide a letter indicating to them the activities made possible by their contribution.)
2) Making sure that the speakers have received their honorarium.
3) Sending thank you notes to all of the individuals who made the parent conference possible, including those agencies who have made contributions.
4) Contacting the conference committee members and holding a wrap-up meeting to evaluate the planning process and the conference day. (At this time any press coverage and conference photos/slides can be shared with everyone.)
5) Contacting the host school/site to assure that nothing has been misplaced and that all items are in order.
6) Gathering the evaluations and preparing a final report. In some cases the members of the steering committee may need to complete conference reports for their respective agencies.

VI. Public Relations

Throughout the conference planning process, correspondence will play a major role in your public relations. The following are some of the types of correspondence you will most likely be generating throughout the conference planning process.

Advisory Board: This year the decision was made to create an advisory board comprised of key individuals whose past efforts have made the conference possible. The members of the board should be carefully selected so that its composition reflects the cultural diversity of your local community, diversity in their professional endeavors, and a balance between the genders. Letters to the Advisory Board will include: 1) a letter of invitation asking them to serve on the board. This letter should explain the goals of the conference and the amount of involvement you expect from them (e.g., a meeting twice a year); 2) a letter confirming their appointment to the board and also extending the conference committee's appreciation for agreeing to serve; and 3) several weeks prior to the conference date a letter should be sent out extending a personal invitation to them to attend the conference--this letter should provide conference details such as date, time, and any special arrangements made for them.

Sponsoring District/School: Once the location of the conference has been identified, you will want to arrange a meeting with the principal/supervisor and key staff to confirm that the site is reserved for the specified day and to discuss some of the different types of arrangements which will be necessary. Correspondence generated to these site officials will most likely include: 1) A letter thanking them for meeting with you and confirming some of the arrangements that were decided upon. 2) Throughout the planning process you will want to occasionally send out a letter to keep them abreast of some of the latest arrangements or to clarify a point. 3) Just prior to the conference, you will want to send a personal letter of invitation confirming their presence or participation at the conference. As you make arrangements with the

conference site officials, there may also be a need to keep district or funding agency officials informed of the arrangements being made.

Conference Committee: Correspondence directed to the Conference Committee will begin with a letter of invitation by the Steering Committee mailed out to individuals who have worked preparing a prior parent conference sponsored by you, or persons who have been identified as instrumental in the new district about to host the conference. It is preferable for the conference committee meetings to take place in the school district, or near or on the conference site. This makes attendance at the meetings easier, and provides a feeling of "ownership" by the sponsoring district.

Throughout the conference planning period you will realize that members enter and exit the group, however do not become discouraged since a core group will eventually develop. Correspondence with the conference committees will include: letters notifying members of the date, time, and place of the on-going meetings (they will receive these announcements more successfully if you acquire the best location where to send them, i.e., home or employment address). Special notices sent out to members will include notices such as a walk-through of the conference site or an announcement of when the conference folders will be filled.

The final piece of correspondence will be a letter of invitation to the conference committee members inviting them to a wrap-up meeting/reception to discuss the success of the conference and discuss what improvements can be made the following year.

Speakers: Correspondence to the presentors will be comprised of: 1) a letter requesting them to speak on a specified topic-- the letter should provide some background information on the conference content; 2) a letter of confirmation specifying the date, time of their commitment, and confirmation of an honorarium if they are to be reimbursed, you may want to include a copy of the present or last year's program with this mailing to familiarize them with the format; 3) a final letter of appreciation should be sent out after the conference accompanied by a copy of their presentation evaluation if this information is available.

Outreach: Promoting the parent conference in your community will require a variety of correspondence to different types of agencies. For example, you may want endorsement by your local county education department, thus you will want to request their participation in promoting the conference and may also want to provide them with a sample of a letter that can be mailed out to school/district administrators.

To announce the conference in your communities you may also want to access local churches to let them know about the conference and request their collaboration in informing their congregations. Another key resource in your community are civic or service-oriented organizations; they too can assist by disseminating conference flyers or announcing the conference at meetings. Local libraries can also help disseminate conference information; city/county library networks can help in this endeavor if the conference committee contacts them. Lastly, individual letters to past participants of the conference serve as a personal invitation for parents to again join you. (Through personal experience, we have learned that sending out flyers to names on general mailing lists has very little impact on increasing your conference attendance.)

Community Resources: Correspondence generated to community resource agencies and organizations should include general information on the conference to familiarize them with its objectives and format. Some of the letters involved in this category include: 1) letters asking co-sponsorship or endorsement by an agency, 2) letters requesting a donation of some sort, e.g., doorprizes, food, supplies, reproduction costs, etc., and 3) letters inviting agencies to have an "exhibitor" table to provide literature of interest to the parents to be invited.

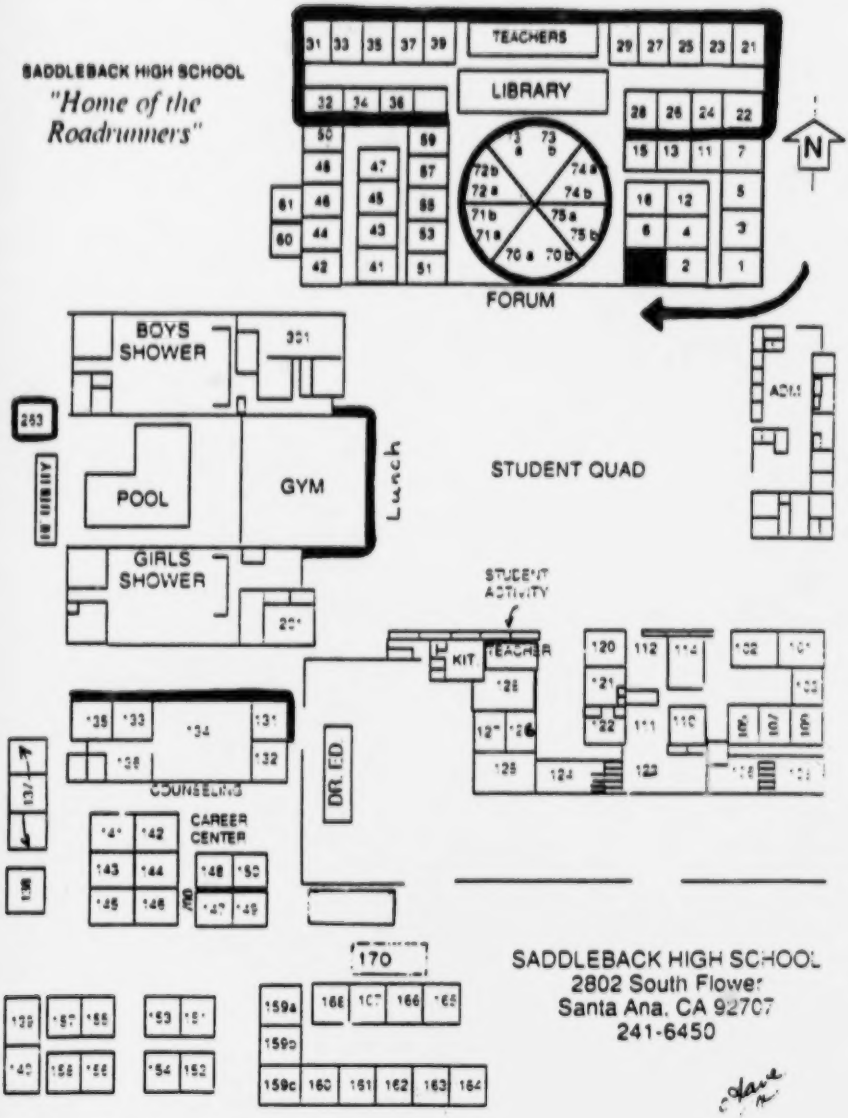
Recognition Correspondence: It is crucial that everyone contributing towards the reality of the conference be acknowledged with a thank you note. Some of the individuals who will be receiving these notes include: 1) everyone at the conference site, including the principal, vice-principal, special division directors, faculty, students and maintenance members, 2) workshop presentors and special guests, 3) conference planning committee members,

4) instrumental persons from sponsoring agencies, and 5) people who donated goods or special efforts. Lastly, it is important to send very personalized notes to individuals who contributed beyond the call of duty. Besides demonstrating appreciation to everyone, these letters will allow you to once again call upon them when necessary for future projects.

APPENDIX A

SADDLEBACK HIGH SCHOOL

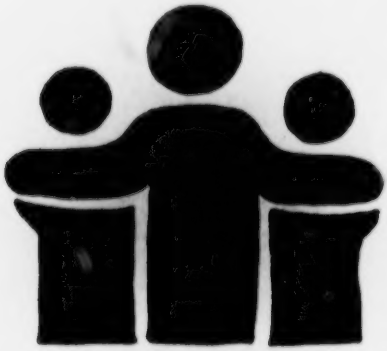
"Home of the Roadrunners"



SADDLEBACK HIGH SCHOOL
2802 South Flower
Santa Ana, CA 92707
241-6450

PARENTS AS PARTNERS
FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

PADRES COLABORANDO POR
EXCELENCIA EN LA EDUCACION



Saddleback High School
Santa Ana, California, May 1988

Conference Program

8:00 - 9:00 Registration and Coffee

9:00 - 9:15 Welcome

Nancy J. O'Connor
Principal, Saddleback High School

Roger Stanton
Orange County Supervisor, 1st District

9:15 - 9:40 Keynote Address

"The Importance of Parent Involvement to Ensure Our Children's Personal and Academic Success"

Pete Moraga
KNX Radio and Channel 2 Reporter
Owner, Moraga & Associates

9:40 - 9:50 Presentation of Advisory Board

Dr. Analda Colón-Muñiz
Coordinator, Curriculum & Bilingual Education
Rowland Unified School District

Conference Overview

Angelina F. Veyna
Human Relations Specialist
Orange County Human Relations Commission

10:00 - 11:15 Session I: Concurrent Workshops

11:15 - 11:45 Information Exhibits -- School Gym

11:50 - 1:05 Session II: Concurrent Workshops

1:10 - 2:30 Lunch & Entertainment

Willard Intermediate School Dancers

"Parents as an inspiration for their children"

Representatives from Saddleback High School's diverse student community:
Korhkamon Smittipapana -Thai
Michael Medina - Navajo
Denise Sanders - English
Sotty Thonn - Cambodian
Emmanuel López - Pilipino
Khuong Do - Vietnamese
Paul O'Hearn - English
Stacy Saucedo - Spanish

Special Guest

"Parents as an Inspiration for their Children"

Ms. Maria Carmen Iversen, Miss Orange County

Doorprizes

Ms. Leticia Vargas
Counselor, Saddleback High School

Mr. Tom Saenz
Administrative Assistant, Special Programs
Orange Unified School District

Closing Thoughts

Dr. Rudy Castruita
Associate Superintendent, Secondary Division
Santa Ana Unified School District

Programa de la Conferencia

8:00 - 9:00 Inscripción y café

9:00 - 9:15 Bienvenida

Nancy J. O'Connor
Principal, Saddleback High School

Roger Stanton
Orange County Supervisor, 1st District

9:15 - 9:40 Huesped de honor

"La importancia de la participación de los padres para asegurar el éxito personal y académico de sus hijos"

Pete Moraga
KNX Radio and Channel 2 Reporter
Owner, Moraga & Associates

9:40 - 9:50 Presentación de los miembros de la Junta Consultiva

Dra. Analda Colón-Muñiz
Coordinator, Curriculum & Bilingual Education
Rowland Unified School District

Resumen de la conferencia

Angelina F. Veyna
Human Relations Specialist
Orange County Human Relations Commission

10:00 - 11:15 Primera sesión: Presentationes

11:15 - 11:45 Mesas con información general (en el gimnasio de la escuela)

11:50 - 1:05 Segunda sesión: Presentaciones

2b

1:10 - 2:30 Comida y Diversión

Grupo de baile de la Escuela Intermedia Willard

"La participación de los padres: un compromiso personal"

Presentación por los alumnos de la Escuela Secundaria Saddleback

Korhkamon Smittipapana - Thai
Michael Medina - Navajo
Denise Sanders - English
Sotty Thonn - Cambodian
Emmanuel López - Pillipino
Khuong Do - Vietnamese
Paul O'Hearn - English
Stacy Saucedo - Spanish

Invitada especial

"Los padres como motivo de inspiración para sus hijos"

María Carmen Iversen, Srita. Orange County

Premios para los asistentes

Leticia Vargas
Counselor, Saddleback High School

Tom Saenz
Administrative Assistant, Special Programs
Orange Unified School District

Comentarios finales

Dr. Rudy Castruita
Associate Superintendent, Secondary Division
Santa Ana Unified School District

SESSION I

10:00 - 11:15 a.m.

 # 1 **Enséñele a sus hijos las destrezas necesarias para que su asistencia a la escuela sea positiva**
María Sánchez
President-elect, Association of Mexican American Educators, Orange County Chapter
Salón Núm. 27

#2 **El poder de la comunicación clara**
María Escudé-Reifler
Consejera y Consultante, Reifler & Associates
Salón Núm. 25

#3 **Programas educativos para mis hijos: ¿Cuáles son las alternativas?**
María Mata-Palacio
Resource Teacher, Remington Elementary School, Santa Ana Unified School District
Salón Núm. 23

#4 **Creando un ambiente seguro en nuestras escuelas y comunidades**
Gus Frías, Coordinador
Operation Safe Schools, Orange County Department of Education
Salón Núm. 21

#5 **La participación de los padres: Una clave para lograr el éxito de sus hijos**
Jannet Quiñones
Graduada, Instituto de Liderazgo para Padres, O.C. Human Relations Commission
Salón Núm. 26

#6 **Living with 10- to 15-year olds**
Patricia Gómez-Lopp, Directora
Hispanic Community Education, Coalition Concerned with Adolescent Pregnancy
Room No. 24

#7 **Parents are the First Teachers**
Billie Masters
Supervisor, Teacher Education, University of California, Irvine
Room No. 33

#8 **Preparing Your Children for College**
John Acuña
Counselor, Rancho Santiago College, Santa Ana
Room No. 35

#9 **Đối Thoại Giữa Phụ Huynh và Học Sinh**
(Communication Between Parents and Students)
Huy Nguyen, Christopher Nguyen, Kim Anh-Nguyen,
Hung Vu, & Thanh Vincent Hoang
Students, University of California, Irvine
Phòng số 37

#10 **(Exploring Parent Involvement Alternatives)**
Vora Huy Kanthoul
Associate Executive Director, United Cambodian Community Inc.
Room 39

#11 **帮助你的孩子在学校的环境里有成就：学业上和社交上**
(Helping your child to be successful in school settings: Academically and Socially)
Wei-lin Lei
Bilingual Education Consultant,
San Diego State University Multifunctional Resource Center
三十四号室

#12 **(The Importance of Higher Education in the United States)**
Khamchong Luangpraseut
Supervisor, Indochinese Program, Santa Ana Unified School District
ห้อง 36

SESSION II

11:50 - 1:05 p.m.

#13 **Comprendiendo el desarrollo de mis hijos**
Patricia Gómez-Lopp
Directora, Hispanic Community Education,
Coalition Concerned with Adolescent Pregnancy
Salón Núm. 24

#14 **¿Y ahora qué? La segunda etapa de la amnistía**
Michelle García, Consejera, Caridades Católicas, Santa Ana
Roberto Nava, Director, Programas Estudiantiles Chicanos,
U.C. Riverside
Salón Núm. 31

#15 **Cómo ayudar a mis hijos a planear su futuro**
Anne Menaldo
Maestra, Escuela Secundaria Carr, Santa Ana
Salón Núm. 23

#16 **Cómo usar nuestro poder personal y cómo ayudar a desarrollar la confianza en sí mismo**
María Escudé-Reifler
Consejera y Consultante, Reifler & Associates
Salón Núm. 25

#17 **La vida en la universidad**
Gina Gámez, Francisco Ramos, y Neri Paíz
Estudiantes, Universidad de California en Irvine
Salón Núm. 33

#18 **¿Cuáles son los requisitos de la universidad y cómo conseguimos ayuda financiera para nuestros hijos?**
John Acuña
Consejero, Rancho Santiago College, Santa Ana
Salón Núm. 35

#19 **Give your children the necessary skills so that school can be a positive experience**
(elementary grade emphasis)
Ms. María Jiménez, Teacher
Jackson Elementary School, Whittier School District
Room No. 27

#20 **Helping your children get through junior high and high school**
Ms. Patricia Marín
Graduate, Parent Leadership Institute,
O.C. Human Relations Commission
Room No. 26

#21 **Creating a Safe School Environment to Ensure Our Children's Academic and Personal Success**
Mr. Gus Frías, Coordinator and Lt. Mark Klugman, Consultant
Operation Safe Schools, O.C. Department of Education
Room No. 21

#22 **Tìm Hiểu Hệ Thống Giáo Dục Hoa Kỳ**
(Getting to Know the American School System)
Mr. Trinh Le
Resource teacher, SAddleback High School, Santa Ana
Phòng số 37

#23 [illegible]
(The importance of participating in Your Children's Schooling Process)
Mr. Chanthan Chea
Social and Educational Services Coordinator,
Southeast Asian Genetics Program, U.C. Irvine
Room 39

#24 [illegible]
(Getting to know your local educational and Mental Health Resources)
Dr. Irene Sun, Psychologist, Orange County Health Care Agency
Thelma Suzuki, LCSW, Clinical Social Worker,
Orange County Health Care Agency

44 [illegible]

Parents as Partners for Excellence in Education
Advisory Board

Russ Barrios, President, Board of Trustees
Orange Unified School District

Jeanne C. Blackwell, Attorney at Law
Legal Aid Society of Orange County

Dr. Isaac Cárdenas, Chair, Chicano Studies Department
California State University, Fullerton

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Pat Krone, External Affairs Manager
Pacific Bell
Orange County Human Relations Commission

Dr. Gil Martínez, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services
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Dr. Alberto Ochoa, Interim Director
San Diego State University Multifunctional Resource Center

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Orange County Hispanic Advisory Council
Orange Unified School District
Santa Ana Unified School District
United Cambodian Community, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sandra Anderson, California Association for Bilingual Education
Chris Arce, EOPS, Rancho Santiago College
Russ Barrios, Board of Trustees, Orange Unified School District
Bob Bristlin, Head Counselor, Saddleback High School
Dr. Isaac Cárdenas, California State University, Fullerton
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Tomás Hernández, Willard Intermediate School
Vora Huy Kanthoul, Associate Executive Director, United Cambodian Community
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Aurora Rodríguez, Orange Unified School District
Saddleback High School Students
Tom Saenz, Director, Special Programs, Orange Unified School District
Willard Intermediate School Dancers

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Leticia Vargas, Saddleback High School
Angelina F. Veyna, Orange County Human Relations Commission
MinhVan Thi Vo, Orange Unified School District
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Olga Zapata-Reynolds, Carr Intermediate School, Santa Ana

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Shirley Bebereia, Valley High School
Laura Bernal, Student, Saddleback High School
Jeanne Blackwell, Anaheim City School District
Chris Chavoya, Student, Saddleback High School
Ricardo Del Mar, Fullerton School District
Imelda Hermosillo, U.C. Irvine
Mela Larwood, Carr Intermediate School
Patricia Marín, Parent
Janet Mills, Student, Saddleback High School
Ricardo Mojarro, Diamond Elementary School
Josephine Ochoa, Valley High School
Marco Orlando, Santa Ana High School
Ester Prieto-Chavez, Lathrop Intermediate School
Olga Ramírez de Miguez, Valley High School
Shellagh Rose, Student, Saddleback High School
Narciso Salce, Lincoln Elementary School
Robert Silva, Edison Elementary School, Santa Ana
John Soto, Valley High School
Shirley Tigner, Hispanic Ministry, Santa Ana
Katrina Wilson, Student, Saddleback High School

We would like to extend a special notice of appreciation to:

The staff at Saddleback High School
The staff of the ESL/Bilingual Department of the
Santa Ana Unified School District
The staff at the Orange County Human Relations Commission
The staff of the UCI Parents in Partnership Program

Finally, this conference could not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of:

Dr. Analda Colón-Muñiz, Rowland Unified School District
Jack E. Oakes, Saddleback High School
Nancy J. O'Connor, Saddleback High School
Betty Poggi, Santa Ana Unified School District
Ramón Reza, Santa Ana Unified School District
Elizabeth Rodriguez, University of California, Irvine
Leticia Vargas, Saddleback High School
Angelina F. Veyna, O.C. Human Relations Commission,

and

the faculty and staff of the Santa Ana Unified School District

We would also like to extend our appreciation to all of our presentors, local education and community agencies and staff, and to all of the parents who helped make today's conference a success.

Thank you

Printing courtesy of

PACIFIC BELL
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This guide was made possible by a grant from the

PACIFIC TELESIS SM
Foundation